

L A W S
OF THE
PHYSICO-MEDICAL
SOCIETY
OF
L O N D O N.

Established in the Year 1771.



PRINTED IN THE YEAR MDCCCLXXIV.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

I N the Year 1772, several Medical Gentlemen residing in London, associated themselves for the Purpose of submitting their respective Opinions to the Examination and Correction of each other; and the Society thus formed was called the PHILOSOPHICO-MEDICAL SOCIETY.—But this Name being applicable not only to *Physics* and *Medicine* (to which alone the Views of the Society were particularly directed) but to all other Branches of Philosophy, the Associated Members afterwards resolved to distinguish themselves by the Name of the PHYSICO-MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON; the better to express the particular Objects of their Pursuit.

As no Set of Regulations contrived *a priori* will, when carried into Execution, in all Respects suit the Government of any Society, so the Laws at first provided for the PHYSICO-MEDICAL SOCIETY were found in many Respects imperfect, and therefore various Alterations and Additions were from Time to Time made, according as the Convenience of the Society, or the Accession of unforeseen Occurrences, seemed to require: Some Derangement and Perplexity having been thus occasioned, and other Alterations in the Original Plan of the Society being likewise desired, a COMMITTEE was, in the Year 1774, appointed to REVISE, ARRANGE and AMEND the Laws of the Society; in consequence of which, a new System, founded on the Results of former Experience, was proposed by the Committee, and having been formally adopted and confirmed by the Society, is now printed for the Use of its Members.

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L A W S

OF THE

Phyfico-Medical Society of London.

ANNUAL ELECTION.

Enacted,

I. **T**HAT to transact the business and support the government of this Society, a Council, consisting of nine Members, and also four Presidents, two Secretaries, and one Treasurer, be annually elected, on the first Monday in each year; that such elections commence at noon, and be conducted in manner following: *viz.*

1. The Secretaries shall deliver to each Member a complete list of all Members of the Society residing in London, or within ten miles of the same, who shall scratch or mark against the names of Nine such Members as he shall judge best qualified and disposed to discharge the duties of Members of the Council, which list so marked or scratched shall be deposited in a receptacle to be provided for that purpose, and when such lists shall have been collected from all the Members present, the two youngest among such Members shall be selected as scrutators on the part of the Society, to assist the Acting-President and Secretaries, in examining and registering the number of votes given to the respective Members, and those Nine who shall be found to have the greatest number of votes shall constitute a Council for the succeeding year.

2. The

2. The Secretaries shall then deliver to each Member a list containing the names of the Members of the new Council *only*, who shall write the word *President* against the names of Four such Members as he may judge best qualified and disposed to discharge the duties of Presidents of the Society; and the word *Secretary* against the names of Two such Members as he shall judge best qualified and disposed to discharge the duties of that office; and also the word *Treasurer* against the name of such Member as he shall judge best qualified and disposed to execute the office of Treasurer to the Society; which list so distinguished shall be deposited and examined in manner aforesaid; and those Members shall be adjudged duly elected to their respective offices who shall be found to have the greatest number of votes.

3. The Members of the Society shall next proceed to elect one of Four persons who shall have been nominated by the Council of the preceeding year to prepare and deliver a Discourse on some Topic relating to Medicine or Natural Philosophy, at the Anniversary Meeting of the Society, next ensuing after such election.

4. The usual business of each Annual Meeting for the respective elections before-mentioned being completed, the Members shall dine with each other on that day, in such place and manner as shall have been directed by the Council of the preceding year, or by the Stewards who may have been appointed for that purpose.

II. That every Member of this Society resident in London, or within ten miles thereof, who shall not attend the Annual Meeting aforesaid, and who shall neglect to dine with the Members on the day of the said Meeting, shall incur the penalty of Five Shillings, to be collected by the Treasurer; unless it shall appear that such absent Member was disabled from attending by sickness, or some other insuperable obstacle.

III. That no Member of the Society who shall be resident beyond the Sea at the time of any future Annual Election shall be capable of being elected into any office.

IV. That

IV. That every President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Member of the Council, who may leave town with an intention to continue absent for the space of three months, excepting the vacation months, shall previously resign his office; and any person holding either of the offices aforesaid, who shall actually leave town, and continue absent for three months during the meetings of the Society, and shall neglect to make such resignation, shall be adjudged to have forfeited his office, and another person shall be elected thereto.

OF THE COUNCIL.

V. THAT the Council be empowered to meet and adjourn themselves from time to time as may appear expedient for transacting the business of their department.

VI. That One of the Presidents do act as Chairman at each Meeting; and that Four Members, including One President, shall constitute a Council.

VII. That all communications from persons not Members of the Society be examined and approved by the Council, before they be read at any Meeting of the Society.

That all matters respecting the private œconomy and government of the Society be first proposed in writing to the Council, and (if judged worthy of the consideration of the Society) be referred to a special Meeting, which they shall direct the Secretary or Secretaries to summon, whenever they may think sufficient business renders it expedient: excepting, however, such matters as shall be of a temporary or urgent nature, which, by consent of the Acting-President, may be proposed in writing by any Member, at an ordinary Meeting, without any reference from the Council.

VIII. That the Council, when assembled, be empowered to direct the Treasurer to make any purchase, expenditure, or payment of money, for and on account of the Society, provided the same does not exceed the sum of Thirty Shillings.

IX. That

IX. That the Council be authorised to direct the Secretary to record such Medical or Physical facts as may appear most deserving among those communicated, or to be communicated, to the Society; and also in the name of the Society to request copies of such dissertations, or other written compositions, as appear most worthy of being preserved, among those which already have been, or may hereafter be, discussed in the Society.

X. That the Council be empowered in the months of November and May annually to audit and settle the Treasurer's accounts.

XI. That no motion respecting the making of any new law, or the alteration or repeal of any former law, be agitated in the Society, unless the same shall have been first proposed in Council, and from thence referred to the consideration of a special Meeting of the Society.

OF THE PRESIDENTS.

XII. THAT the Presidents do officiate or take the Chair in rotation, or otherwise, as may be convenient for the purpose of conducting, ordering, and governing the business of the several Meetings.

XIII. That the Acting-President have a discretionary power, as he may think expedient, to call any other Member to order; and if such call be disregarded, that the President be authorised to require such disobedient Member to absent himself from the Society, until a special Meeting shall have been summoned to determine upon the demerit of his disobedience; and any Member who may refuse or neglect to absent himself in obedience to such requisition shall be adjudged *ipso facto* expelled from the Society.

XIV. That any Member who shall insult or resist a President, whilst in the execution of his office, shall suffer expulsion, or such other punishment as the Society, from the circumstances of his offence, shall judge expedient to inflict.

XV. That if any Member shall at any time think himself aggrieved by any order or decision of the Acting-President, he shall notwithstanding, for the sake of good order,

order, conform to such order or decision, until the Meeting be adjourned; after which, he shall be allowed to complain in writing to the Council, who shall direct a special Meeting of the Society to be summoned, as soon after as may be convenient, for considering the merit of such complaint.

XVI. That no President do take the Chair when any complaint respecting himself is to be agitated.

XVII. That as all contradictions to a President in the execution of his office must appear indecent, it is therefore expected, that every Acting-President will delay giving his opinion upon any Medical or Physical Subject under debate, until such Members as are disposed to speak thereto, shall have respectively delivered their sentiments, to the end that no Member may be precluded from freely giving his opinion; provided however, that nothing in this article shall restrain the Acting-President from any interposition which he may think expedient for the preservation of good order, or the speedy termination of a trivial or unnecessary dispute.

OF THE TREASURER.

XVIII. THAT the Treasurer be authorised from time to time to collect all monies due in any manner to the Society; and the same to pay or dispose of in such manner as he shall be lawfully directed by the Society, or Council.

XIX. That if any refusal or neglect of payment of any money due to the Society shall arise, the Treasurer shall inform the Council thereof, and pursue such measures as they shall advise or direct.

XX. That the Treasurer keep regular accounts of all his receipts and disbursements, and submit the same to be audited by the Council, in the months of May and November in each year,

OF THE SECRETARIES.

XXI. THAT the Secretaries do officiate alternately, or otherwise, as may be convenient, and that the official

act of either be deemed valid and sufficient; and that they, or one of them, do record the proceedings of the Society and of the Council at their respective Meetings; do open and communicate all letters or writings directed to the Society or the Council; and from time to time write such letters, issue such summons and notices, and execute such other business as may be lawfully required of them, either by the Society, the Council, or the Acting-President for the time being.

XXII. That the Secretaries have likewise the custody of the Seal of the Society, and affix the same to such acts only as they may lawfully authenticate thereby.

OF THE REGISTER AND LIBRARIAN.

XXIII. THAT a person be annually elected under the denomination of a Register and Librarian, whose business it shall be to prepare certificates, to have the care of all books, papers and manuscripts, belonging to the Society, which may be intended for public inspection, which he shall properly arrange and number, and also keep an alphabetical catalogue of the same, expressing their titles, &c. as well as a book containing the names of the Members, with the places of their abode, in which he shall mark against the name of any Member who shall send for a book, &c. from the Library, the number of the book received, and the time when; and (as soon as returned) shall draw a line through the number, in the presence of the person who brings the book.

XXIV. That all books, &c. borrowed from the Library, shall be returned within the terms following: *viz.*

Pamphlets within one week; bound octavos within a fortnight; ditto quartos within a month; and folios within two months: and any Member who shall keep any book or pamphlet beyond the times specified, shall, besides returning the same, pay a fine, according to the discretion of the Council, (to whom the Librarian shall in such cases appeal) not exceeding the value of such book or pamphlet; and that no Member be permitted to borrow more than one volume at any one time.

OF CANDIDATES.

XXV. That ~~no~~ Candidate for admission into this Society shall be put to the ballot, until a certificate in his favour, subscribed by at least Two Members of the Society, personally acquainted with his merit and qualifications, shall have been presented, and read at two Meetings preceding that on which such ballot shall be entered upon.

XXVI. That the suffrages of three-fourths of the Members voting shall be necessary for the election of any Candidate.

That a Candidate who shall have been duly elected, and shall present himself for admission into the Society, shall pay into the hands of the Treasurer, the Honorary Fine of One Pound One Shilling, and shall subscribe the following engagement: *viz.*

We whose Names are underwritten do engage to obey the Laws, and, as far as our Powers extend, to support the Honour and promote the Ends of the PHYSICO-MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

After which he shall be presented to the Acting-President, who, rising from the chair, and taking the Candidate by the hand, shall admit him a Member of the Society, in the following, or similar words: *viz.*

By the Authority delegated to me as President of the PHYSICO-MEDICAL SOCIETY, I do admit you a Member thereof.

XXVII. That any Candidate who shall have been duly elected, and shall not within six meetings after such election present himself for admission into the Society in the usual manner, shall lose the benefit of such election, and be for ever excluded from the Society; unless it shall appear that such Candidate was unable to present himself as aforesaid, either from sickness, or some other insuperable obstacle.

OF HONORARY MEMBERS.

XXVIII. THAT Gentlemen eminent for Medical or Physical knowledge, and who, from being settled at a considerable distance from London, are incapable of discharging

charging the duties and enjoying the benefits of ordinary Members of this Society, shall be capable of election and admission in the usual manner as Honorary Members; their respective qualifications being certified in writing by at least Three Members of the Society, acquainted either with their persons or writings.

XXIX. That every Honorary Candidate, who may be duly elected, shall be capable of admission by proxy (upon the warrant of a letter or other written authority, in his own hand-writing), and shall be excused from payment of the customary fine of admission, as well as from all contributions and duties whatever.——Every Honorary Member, as often as it may be convenient, shall have a right to attend the meetings of the Society, and to deliver his sentiments on any subject under consideration; but no such Member shall be allowed to vote, or hold any office in the Society.

XXX. That any Gentleman who shall have duly discharged the duty of an ordinary Member of this Society, and who shall be about to remove from within ten miles of London, and shall desire to be translated to the station of an Honorary Member, shall be considered as such, upon signifying this his desire in writing to the Secretaries of the Society.

XXXI. That Honorary Members shall be required to present themselves, either personally or by proxy, for admission, within One Year after their election.

OF THE MEETINGS.

XXXII. THAT this Society will meet every Monday evening at Seven o'clock (excepting the months of June, July and August, during which the Meetings shall be discontinued; and excepting the first Monday of each year, on which the Society will meet at noon), and will adjourn at or soon after the hour of Nine.

XXXIII. That the principal end and endeavour of the Society at such Meeting be to promote their mutual improvement, by reciprocally submitting their sentiments upon subjects of Medicine and Natural Philosophy to the examination and correction of each other.

XXXIV. That for this purpose every Member in his turn shall deliver a Dissertation, or other written Composition, to the Secretary, which shall be read to the Society at the close of the Meeting preceding that on which such Dissertation shall be discussed.

XXXV. That Five Members shall constitute a Society, and that as soon after the hour of Seven as Five Members shall be assembled, One of the Presidents shall take the Chair; or in the absence of all the Presidents, a Member of the Council shall officiate as such; or if no such Member be present, then the eldest Member of the Society who may happen to be present shall act as President.

XXXVI. That the entries of the proceedings of the Society at the preceding Meeting be read by the Secretary, immediately after the Chair shall have been taken as aforesaid; and, unless objected to by some Member, the same shall be considered as approved by the Society, and as such, shall be subscribed by the name of the Acting-President; after which, the Society shall proceed to hear any facts or intelligence respecting Medicine, or Natural Philosophy, which may be communicated by any Member, or by any other person under the restrictions before-mentioned: but that no such facts or intelligence be considered as a subject of debate.

XXXVII. That next in order, the Society shall proceed to the reading of certificates in favour of Candidates, their election or rejection by ballot, and their admission by the Acting-President, provided any such business be regularly before the Society; after which, the Society shall proceed to hear and discuss the Dissertation, or other written Composition, which shall have been previously delivered as a subject of debate for the then present Meeting; the Author of which shall endeavour (in conjunction with such Members as may favour his opinions) to support his doctrine, and refute any objections which may be made thereto. That during the debate (which the Acting-President shall superintend and regulate), no more than One Member be permitted to stand at the same time. That the Member first rising, after the Member who last spoke shall be seated, have liberty to speak next in order. That no Member, except the
Acting-

Acting-President, shall be allowed to interrupt any Member while speaking. That no Member be permitted to speak or reply more than once to any particular topic, except with permission of the Acting-President. That no personal reflection on any Member present be permitted; and that the Acting-Presidents have a discretionary power to desire the opinion of any visitor on the subject of debate.

XXXVIII. That every Member be allowed to introduce a visitor, but that he, to prevent interruption, shall deliver the name of such visitor to the President, in writing, previous to the commencement of business.

G E N E R A L L A W S.

XXXIX. **T**HAT all questions respecting the government or œconomy of the Society, or which are not specially provided for by some particular Law, be determined by a majority of votes; and that whenever any person shall desire the determination to be made by ballot, such request shall be granted.

XL. That to provide for the expences of the Society, each Member, besides the honorary fine of admission, shall yearly contribute the sum of One Pound One Shilling, which shall be paid in advance to the Treasurer, in two equal half-yearly payments; the first on the twenty-ninth day of September, and the second on the twenty-fifth day of March: and if any Member shall so far neglect such payments, as that two payments do become due or in arrears from him, the Treasurer shall complain to the Council, who shall cause the name of such Member to be erased from the Books of the Society, unless it shall appear that such delinquency has been occasioned by residence abroad, and that the same is not likely to continue. And farther, that no Member residing in London, or within ten miles thereof, who shall have neglected the payment of any half-yearly contribution for the space of One Month after the same shall have been due, be permitted to vote or speak relative to any matter agitated in the Society, until he shall have first paid such contribution.

XLI. That fourteen days before the meeting at which any Member ought in turn to deliver a Dissertation, the Acting-President shall give notice to such Member of this part of his duty to the Society; or if such Member be absent, shall direct the Secretary to do it by letter: and any Member who, on receiving such notice, shall neglect to deliver the customary Dissertation, or written Composition, unless he shall be sick, or at a great distance from town, shall forfeit, for the first offence, Five Shillings and Three-Pence; for the second, Ten Shillings and Six-Pence; and for the third offence, shall be expelled the Society: and every Member who shall not attend at the Meeting on which his Dissertation shall in course be debated, shall forfeit Five Shillings.

XLII. That the money arising from the half-yearly contributions, the admission of Members, fines, &c. shall constitute a fund for defraying the expences of the Society; and that the surplus of such money be expended in the purchase of such books as the Society, or the Council from time to time, shall direct.

XLIII. That any Member who shall persist in the breach of any law of the Society, or who having broken any law shall refuse to make such satisfaction as the Society may prescribe, shall be expelled.

XLIV. That the Dissertation delivered for discussion be read at the close of the Meeting preceding that on which it is to be debated, and that during this interval, such paper be left with the Librarian, for the perusal of any Members who apply for that purpose.

XLV. That if any Member shall offend against any law of this Society, and, to avoid making satisfaction for such offence, shall attempt to withdraw himself from the Society, he shall *ipso facto* be expelled.

XLVI. That any person who may have been translated to the list of Honorary Members, shall at any time be intitled, without ballot, to return to the station of an ordinary Member, upon delivering a written claim for that purpose to the Council. And every Honorary Member, who shall be willing to pay the usual fine of admission, and discharge the contributions and duties of an Ordinary Meeting, shall be also intitled to be translated to that station, without ballot.

XLVII. That

XLVII. That every Member of the Society shall be intitled to a certificate of his having been duly elected and admitted, he paying the Register Five Shillings for the expence of parchment, engrossing, &c. which certificate shall be authenticated by the Seal of the Society, and signed by at least Two of the Presidents, and counter-signed by at least One Secretary.

XLVIII. That on the last Monday in December annually, the Secretaries shall deliver to each Member a complete list of the several Dissertations or written Compositions which shall have been presented and debated in the Society, during the course of the then concluding year, together with the names of their respective authors, and each Member shall mark against the title of such Dissertation as he may think most deserving among them, and the several lists so marked, being deposited in a receptacle for that purpose to be provided, shall be examined by the officers of the Society, and the Dissertation which shall be found to have the greatest number of suffrages, shall be adjudged the most deserving, and the author of it shall be intitled to a certificate thereof, under the Seal of the Society, and also to a prize, to be hereafter specified; which certificate and prize shall be publicly presented to such author, by the Acting-President, on the Monday following: *viz.* on the day of the succeeding Annual Election.

XLIX. That a complete List of the Officers and Members of the Society be printed immediately after each Annual Election.